

New York March 6. 1843

My Dear Friend

I feel, on taking my pen, how unnecessary to myself must be any answer that I can write to your letter, for the plain honesty of which, accept my hearty thanks. Let abolitionists always be thus plain. How much would we have escaped in times past, by honesty of speech? I would rather be knocked on the head with a club at any time, than to know or suspect myself to be walking among concealed daggers. My note to Eliza Spring, with the word "fervent" was written very hastily, in the midst of business, & on the instant of the closing of the pledge, & I meant so little by it that I would not have hesitated a moment to send it to you. My simple object was to repose Maria's letter with his discretion - as I told her afterwards, the tone & general language of it was such as would appear ungracious to the Board & to you. I judged it quite needless, on the point of her retracing from the stand, that such ungracious evidences* of her unfitness for the Editorship of which she is as capable as you can be, ~~the~~ ^{should} be multiplied. You know enough, & there is merit in forgetting & burying sometimes.

* Not so meant by her, but so written, as, under all the circumstances of the case, to excuse others for so regarding it.

Instead of "feverish". I mean this: A good, clear,
sound & unembarrassed friendship cannot be disturbed
by such bluntness as Mr Child used in her letter -
Where such mutual misconceptions exist as now do,
between our Boston friends & Mr Child, the effect of
such expressions is rather calculated to increase the
difficulty, fearing which, I wrote as I did. Sensitivity
would have been the true word perhaps. I was wholly
careless of words & phrases, in my haste. It is as
plain to me that you do injustice to Mr Child, as
it is that she is unjust to you - but we might con-
sume a ream of paper in writing, & not understand
each other. The article on sectarianism was by
no means such as I would have wished it. I saw
immediately how much worse it would appear to you
than it really is - & how very much more than she
really intended to convey, you would take it for. But
the very large majority of her readers will understand
it as she meant. Mr Child wrote from Washington
in special commendation of it, & no article that
she has written for many weeks, has drawn forth
such liberal expressions of unity. & simply because
the majority see it through a different medium
from you. Understand me - I don't like it but

I think you do it not full justice. Further of Mrs Child's letter to the Board. All the circumstances of our struggle through the past winter were before her - and I feel safe in assuring you that it cannot enter into your mind, what beggings & shiftings, promises & failures & borrowings, over & oft again & perpetually, we were obliged to stand the brunt & dishonor of. Times were set at which we were to have so much - & thereupon we promised our laboring hands, landlord &c. this occurring repeatedly with repeated disappointments. More than a dozen times during the winter did I borrow 15 or 20 dollars to divide among our hands on Saturday Evening - & this, being already in debt hundreds, previously borrowed. During the greater part of the last six months I have had my own salary literally pawned ^{for two months in advance,} to keep our printers from being sold out for house rent. Mrs Child too has borrowed - & begged others to borrow, while she had not a single decent seasonable drop in which to crop the threshold of the street door.

(I charge you on the faith of friendship to repeat nothing of this - let no circumstances induce you to grate it known beyond your walls.)

I refer to these things as somewhat palliative of the tone of Maria's letter, and beg you judge not too harshly. & also, because you say truly that our strife's have always had an unpleasant connexion with money matters, quoting "When poverty comes in at the door" &c (soliloquy - "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.") I know of no ground

for apprehension that we shall have strife
about money matters. But is not this equally
true with your quotation - That, were the love
of abolitionists for the cause of humanity, & their
faithfulness to their own solemn pledges, what they
should be, Poverty would not come in at the door -
or if it did, "I'll be shot" as D. Crockett says, if it would
wear so lean & gaunt & spectre like form as it has
at No 143 Napan St. Never has my faith been
shaken for an instant in the ability, willingness
& determination of our Antislavery Constituent to
pay honorably, all their obligations - No such
thoughts as of final defection ever entered our heads.
But the conviction is thoroughly established in my mind
that the existence of present embarrassments beyond
next May, ought to be regarded as the clear ^{indication} of a wish
on the part of its members, that the Am. Soc. should
cease to be. We have remembered that to struggle for
life is a high duty, but if life yet come not, notwithstanding
our struggles, the battle should be abandoned.
Look at us! What are we - & what have we done?
Nothing!! The Country knows not for the feeling of us, that
we exist as an Ex Com^{ee}. Not because we have had
deficient means - but because of necessities incurred in
consequence of such deficiency. We can bear poverty.
We can bear the obtaining of credit in all branches of

an establishment from Editor down to printers' devil - but we can't bear that all our energy & time which should be devoted to the cause, be spent at the pumps. This is the dreadful necessity incurred, that will kill us. The Ex Comm have been for two years, equal to a cypher. Nobody is so sensible of this as ourselves. I do not, as you seem to think, repudiate the idea that efficiency can be achieved. I would not leave things to their unapisted growth, but urge them forward as fast as we can establish the conditions of healthy life. When I said to Mr Chapman, that the know not "how little had been done". I meant, how little in this city. We had been commended for doing much - whereas the much was done, as you say elsewhere, & especially in Map.

With respect to Mr Collins. I cannot pretend to say that his agency is not all that you claim for it, in Map. But if ever agency failed signally, his has failed for us. & you must not feel offended at my speaking thus plainly. I did not, I think, give it as my belief that he was working adversely to us - if so. I recall it, for I don't know that to be the case. It is not however to our advantage or credit in any way, that other agents in western New York & Connecticut, should feel called upon to

disavow in the name of the Am. Society the doctrines of
~~its~~ general agent, on the subject of Slavery. This has been
done repeatedly, whether for sufficient cause, I know not.

I state only the fact of the disavowal. Dr Hudson is a
man totally incapable of playing false to a friend - ^{he is} of the
truest & the most tried. Of which you would be satisfied
on acquaintance. I am sure he has not abused John's
confidence. In stating what Boyle, Monroe, & Paulings
had said, I did not mean to affirm that my judgment
of his usefulness was formed on their representations. You
may remember my asking you & Mrs. Chapman some
special questions about Collins, while in Boston last
Summer. The intent of which was to relieve my own
mind of misgivings that burdened it, from the first
moment he was proposed as genl. agent. Your answers
as to his capability, discrimination, & principles of
action, satisfied me to great extent - but I could not, &
never have gotten rid for one moment, of the feelings that
possessed my mind in the beginning - Nevertheless, I have
endeavored honestly to cooperate with him in all his
plans. He was furnished with a Commission to appoint
as many agents as he saw fit, & whom. In fact, the
helm of the Ship was given to him. And both Mrs Child
& myself were the more careful about doing or saying the
least thing that might by possibility thwart him, because of
our non coincidence of opinion. The simple fact is, that
Mr Collins, ourselves, & the Mass friends have relations

occupied false positions ever since his appointment -
which was therefore unjust to him especially. We
surrendered our judgment to the Boston friends without
reserve, & all parties pay for it in the unhappy fruit.
However, the thing is done - & we must go forward in
the way of duty, being excited to greater care & vigilance
by remembrance of past errors. It is not so much
any thing that Mr Collins has done, that leads me to
the opinion that he is not a safe hand in whom
to repose the greatness of the Anti Slavery trust. What
he has not done, destroys my confidence in his power
of impressing mind & conscience rightly - in which
there is some analogy to the causes of your distrust
of the Standard. You think it has lost that power,
& therefore it fails to draw support. So I think of
Collins. At the last Ann^e Mtg. I had an evidence
of extraordinary capriciousness in his conduct on
the finance question - which was observable by
many besides myself. His extraordinary exertions &
privations (heaven reward him for all) have so destroy-
ed the vigor of his general system, as to leave him
in a highly nervous state, which would disqualify
any person from difficult duties. In all this, I
speak freely as I feel, & if it seem harsh to you, &
unjust to him, I crave your forbearance. It is

ing way of honesty. Why it ^{Part of letter} never occurred to me
to speak of this while in B. I know not. It was
one of the special matters on which I intended to
converse with you - but it wholly escaped my
thoughts, even when Collins was at my side in
your parlor. I am not aware of any change in
my opinions since my visit. They are the same
with respect to the Editorship of the Standard & the
Standard itself. I told Mrs Child yesterday in
so many words "you are not fit for the Editor"
to which she answered "I know it." - Abby Kelley
writes in the Boomerang vein against D. L. C
as Editor. She speaks of his "dirty dabbling in
politics", which I take to be a mere echo of
Jackson's slang. I must conclude my hastily
& unsatisfactorily, hoping & enjoining that your
attendance of the Ann^c Mtg will be prevented
by nothing. We shall be in another house, &
reserve room for as many of your family
as can come. The absence of Mrs Chapman
will be a calamity.